

Good Construction?

The support and construction of a spa is more important than we like to credit it for. As you research your spa purchase, you may find yourself caught up in the more glamorous features of the spa you see. But you should ask yourself, how long do I want the spa to last? Then do some research and ask yourself this next question: How long can I expect a particular spa to last?

As you consider various models of spas, you may find out that the answers to these questions do not match with regards to specific spas. However, with a well-designed, well-built spa, these two answers can and will match to give you the longevity and quality you expect. The trick will be to find a manufacturer who can provide that kind of spa for you. Refuse to deal with salespeople who only tell you what you want to hear so they can make a sale. Instead, take the time to read up on construction issues, and make an informed

The logo for Clearwater Spas, featuring the brand name in a white, cursive script font on a dark blue rectangular background.

Dealer Locator

How well is your spa built?

SPA SENSE

PRODUCT INFORMATION GUIDE



TEL:

Support

According to The American Heritage Dictionary, support is defined as follows: *To hold in position so as to keep from falling, sinking, or slipping. To bear the weight of, especially from below.*

A gallon of water weighs 8.345 pounds. As you fill up your spa, it gets heavier. An average spa weight 3000 pounds. With that much weight, the support of the spa is very important.

WOOD VS. PLASTIC

Spa manufacturers support their spas in one of four ways. The first is to rest the spa shell on the spa cabinet and rely on foam to support the seating areas of the spas. The second method is to attach SPF (Spruce, Pine, Fir) 2x4s horizontal to the shell surface.

PVC Pillar Supports



This helps spread the distribution and the weight of the spa over a larger surface area, but the spa hangs on the spa cabinet with no support underneath it. The third method is to use SPF 2x4s in a "T" formation. Again, the weight is spread over a larger surface area, only this time, there is a support to the ground. The

fourth method is to use 6" vertical supports in strategic areas of the spa shell, similar to the 2x4s are used in the third method to spread the weight over a larger surface area and from top to bottom. The major difference between this method and the third is the material used for the supporting material: wood in the third versus plastic in the fourth. Which one do you think will last longer?



2x4 base on a foam tub.

But the advantages of using PVC instead of wood supports does not end there. It's also important to consider how the supports are attached. The framing of the spa limits how spa manufacturers can support it. Many manufacturers build the base frame from pressure-treated 2x4s. It is difficult to attach the vertical supports to the frame because the frame doesn't have much room for attaching the support. Other manufacturers build the base so that the footwell sits right on the ground. Again, building this way makes it difficult to attach the support to anything. Some manufacturers who build spas with plastic bottoms attach the plastic to a wood frame that attaches to the supports. Others use PVC pillars that have special mounts in which the base for the pillars can snugly sit. This method makes the most sense.

MOISTURE BUILD UP

There are a number of reasons to build with plastic instead of wood, the main one being that wood rots with ground contact. Manufacturers who build with wood also fill the cabinet cavity with a urethane foam that retains 5% water. The water attacks the wood and dry rot sets in. This moisture adds a lot of weight to the spa and rots the wood. If the spa is not well supported underneath, or is supported by the skirt, it will crack or bow. As a result, the life expectancy of



Spa bottom where the footwell rests on the ground to support the weight of the spa full of water and people.

the warranty is greatly reduced. Shop informed, and make sure the spa you choose can last a good, long while.

"It has been my personal vision over the past 29 years to design and build spas that re-define the spa industry."

Ronald Clearwater